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ABSTRACT

The increasingly interdisciplinary nature of translation studies has multiplied theories of translation. A shared interest in a topic, however, is no guarantee that what is acceptable as a theory in one field or approach will satisfy the conceptual requirements of a theory in others. In the West, from antiquity to the late nineteenth century, theoretical statements about translation fell into traditionally defined areas of thinking about language and culture: literary theory and criticism, rhetoric, grammar, philosophy. And the most frequently cited theorists comprised a fairly limited group. One such catalogue might include: Cicero, Horace, Quintilian, Augustine, Jerome, Dryden, Goethe, Schleiermacher, Arnold, Nietzsche. Twentieth-century translation theory reveals a much expanded range of fields and approaches reflecting the differentiation of modern culture: not only varieties of linguistics, literary criticism, philosophical speculation, and cultural theory, but experimental studies and anthropological fieldwork, as well as translator training and translation practice. Any account of theoretical concepts and trends must acknowledge the disciplinary sites in which they emerged in order to understand and evaluate them. At the same time, it is possible to locate recurrent themes and celebrated topoi, if not broad areas of agreement.